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ABSTRACT

One of the most important correlates of an instructionally effective school is its climate. Effective schools have an atmosphere that denotes a safe and orderly environment, without being oppressive and where conditions exist that are conducive to learning. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development has identified a set of questions to be used in the assessment of school climate, climate being broadly defined here to cover academic emphasis, orderly environment, and expectations for success. The questions are grouped to indicate the contributions of each set of participants in a healthy school: students, teachers, and principals. In the pluralistic public schools of today, the challenge is to create a school climate that recognizes and validates the presence of each ethnic or cultural group within the school. It is vital that teachers and principals avoid two assumptions about culturally different learners: (1) that they are able to abandon their values, traditions, language, and behaviors when they enter the school: and (2) that they feel truly part of the school when it fails to acknowledge their heritage, portrays them as a conquered people, offers few role models, and provides few professionals committed to the advancement of the culturally different. (The remainder of the paper outlines the role of the principal and the teacher within multicultural educational environments, and offers special advice on instructing students of low socioeconomic status). (KH)

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TEACHER AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS: INSTRUCTING MINORITY CHILDREN

Paper Presented at the Annual
AASA Meeting
Dallas, Texas

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TEACHER AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS:

INSTRUCTING MINORITY CHILDREN

Many educators have become convinced that there are observable characteristics of schools that are important in the actual achievement of students. In recent years, research done by Brookover and Lezotte (1977), Edmonds (1979), Rutter (1979) and a number of others, has focused on the study of the characteristics of both effective and ineffective schools.

Researchers have examined schools that had similar facilities and equipment, where teacher training and background was relatively similar, and where the student populations were very similar. Yet, in some of the schools the achievement of students was better than in other similar schools. This has led researchers to examine carefully the characteristics of the schools that are effective, and to determine whether or not there is a correlation between the success of some schools and the characteristics noted.

Observational research has found that there are indeed certain characteristics of effective schools that appear to correlate strongly with the success of students. It cannot be said that the characteristics cause the schools to be more effective, nor can the particular characteristics be ranked.

Commonly, five correlates are identified in instructionally effective schools: (1) Purpose, (2)

Expectations, (3) Measuring Results, (4) Leadership, and (5) Climate. A brief overview of each of the correlates follows:

Purpose: All schools have an academic mission. The focus on academics must be first and foremost within any effective school. The basic mission of the school must be understood by all, and articulated by each individual in the school in the same manner.

Expectations: Within effective schools, teacher behaviors indicate that they expect all students to master, at the very least, basic minimal skills.

Measuring Results: The basis for program evaluation is the use of measures of student achievement.

Leadership: The principal is actively involved in the school a an instructional leader.

Climate: Effective schools have an atmosphere about them that denotes a safe and orderly environment, without being oppressive, and where conditions exist that are conducive to learning.

In this paper, it is the correlate of climate that we will look at most closely for the improvement of instruction of minority children. That is not to say that the other correlates are of any less importance -- they too must be emphasized. However, the actual process of teaching children takes place primarily in the classroom, and is centered around the classroom teacher. Teachers in

effective schools are not onlookers to education, but are active participants in the educational process.

The concept of climate has both a schoolwide dimension, and a classroom dimension. At the building level, one thinks of climate in terms of a safe and orderly environment, based on rules and rules and regulations that are fair, and are both firmly and consistently enforced.

Effective teachers establish a classroom climate that provides focus on the academic process. An orderly, businesslike atmosphere prevails. In addition, the element of time on task is attended to by providing procedures and practices that keep students on task. Smooth transitions are provided between activities and there is little wasted time or effort.

The monitoring of homework, seatwork and student progress in general, is done on a regular basis by effective teachers. In addition, those teachers are sensitive to various teaching and learning styles. Effective teachers are aware of the importance of self-fulfilling prophecies and the importance of appropriate expectations in dealing with students. They are especially sensitive to particular techniques and methods that are best suited to assist low SES and minority students in reaching their full potential.

Taking into consideration the present composition of our schools and the increasing number of ethnic and linguistic minority students who will be attending our

schools in the very near future, we cannot but pay very close attention to the messages being sent forth to school administrators regarding teacher and school effectiveness for all children regardless of race, ethnicity and economic condition.

In looking at school climate previously defined to include an orderly environment, an emphasis on academics, and high expectations for students' success, Lezotte and other researchers have chosen to include as important components the values, beliefs and attitudes of the entire school community. Their research includes not necessarily just an identification of those values, beliefs and attitudes but an evaluation of how they are reflected in the institutional patterns, processes and behavioral practices utilized in the school across time.

The focus is on the school community members, specifically since they are the ones who are directly responsible for setting the parameters for an effective school climate. This implies, on the one hand, that there are certain policies and directives which the administration has delineated for teachers and students. On the other hand, this also suggests that teachers and students have a clear and definite understanding of those policies and directives.

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development in its publication entitled Effective Schools

and Classrooms: A Research Based Perspective (1984) has identified a set of questions which administrators could address in the assessment of school climate. Since schools are made up of students, teachers and principals and they are the major contributors to school climate, the questions are grouped to indicate each participant's contributions.

Academic Emphasis: Students

Do students master the academic work?

Do students bring books and pencils to class?

Do students use the library on a weekly basis?

Do students perceive congruence among the faculty in enforcing school rules and strictly controlling classroom behavior?

AS EVIDENCED BY:

1. Report card grades
2. Unit tests
3. Teachers' judgement

Academic Emphasis: Teachers

Instruction

Is time spent efficiently and directly on teaching academic skills?

Do lessons start on time and continue without interruptions?

Is whole-group instruction used?

Do teachers provide rewards for actual achievement?

Do teachers praise students for work well done?

Do teachers regularly give and mark homework?

Planning

Do teachers plan lessons in advance?

Do teachers regularly give and mark homework?

Other

Do teachers expect students to succeed?

Are staff members willing and available for consultation by children about problems?

AS EVIDENCED BY:

1. Student achievement
2. Lessons beginning and ending on time
3. Bolstering of academic emphasis
4. Teachers' availability to help students with problems

Academic Emphasis: Principals

Behaviors

Do teachers and principals support the academic focus of the school by spending most of the school day on instructional activities?

Does the principal regularly observe classrooms and confer with teachers on instructional matters?

Does the principal check to see that teachers assign homework?

Structures

Is course planning done by teacher groups rather than by isolated individuals?

Do teachers feel their interests are represented by those making decisions?

Are rewards fairly earned by a large number of students?

Beliefs

Do principals and teachers believe and expect that students can master their academic work?

Does the social structure of the school teach those who work and learn there that their actions have some effect?

AS EVIDENCED BY:

1. Promotion of school's academic emphasis
2. Teachers feeling that their interests are represented when decisions are made
3. Evidence of open lines of communication
4. Organized and maintained school-wide reward structures

Orderly Environment: Students

Perceptions of discipline

Do students perceive that discipline is unfairly administered?

Do students perceive congruence among the faculty in enforcing school rules and strictly controlling classroom behavior?

Student participation

Do students use the library on a weekly basis?

Do students take care of school resources?

Have students participated in organizing a school-wide charity drive?

Are a high percentage of students named in school assemblies for their participation?

Do high proportions of students hold positions of responsibility?

Do students have equal and fair access to academic and co-curricular school programs?

AS EVIDENCED BY:

1. A low incidence of violence and vandalism
2. Higher than expected student achievement
3. Less student behavior problems

Orderly Environment: Teachers

Instruction

Do teachers start lessons on time and continue without interruption?

Do teachers regularly give and mark homework?

Do teachers provide rewards for actual achievement?

Classroom management

Are positive models of behavior provided by teachers?

Does the feedback students receive in terms of rewards and praise outnumber punishments?

Are punishments delivered in a way that indicates firm disapproval of misbehavior while avoiding humiliation and avoiding modeling violence?

Does the faculty express punitive or authoritarian attitudes toward students?

Do teachers usually handle their infrequent discipline problems themselves?

Are teachers available to consult with students about problems?

AS EVIDENCED BY:

1. Teachers beginning lessons promptly
2. Fewer discipline problems
3. Orderly school environment

Orderly Environment: The Principal

Consensus building for an orderly environment

Have teachers and administrators come to a working consensus on the patterns of acceptable behavior for staff, students, and administration?

Has the principal built shared expectations and strong coordination about school rules?

Does the principal provide a reliable system of support, appropriate in-service training, and opportunities for staff to coordinate their actions in areas of instruction and discipline?

Delivery of discipline

Does the principal actively set the tone and focus of the school by observing classrooms, enforcing the discipline code in a "firm but fair" manner, and setting goals for the school that are supported by the staff?

Are punishments delivered in a way that indicates firm disapproval of misbehavior while avoiding humiliation and avoiding modeling violence?

Do students perceive that discipline is fairly administered?

AS EVIDENCED BY:

1. High achievement
2. Orderly environment
3. A sense of fairness

Expectations for Success

Students

Do students feel the school helps them to master academic work?

Do students believe that luck is more important than hard work?

Do students believe that they can get ahead without something or someone stopping them?

Teachers and principals

Do students, faculty, administration, and community feel that their own efforts govern their futures?

Does the social structure of the school teach those who work and learn there that their actions have some effect?

Do principals and teachers believe and expect that students can master their academic work?

Do teachers expect students to succeed?

Do staff expect students to succeed and achieve?

Do teachers have high expectations of all students, regardless of race or class?

AS EVIDENCED BY:

NOTE 1. Expectations cannot directly be observed in behavioral terms

2. Expectations help re-enforce an orderly environment and academic emphasis

3. Enhanced self concept on student's part

4. Students know what is expected of them and believe they can measure up to these high standards

Planning Instruction for Minority Student

Central to the problem of creating an Effective School Climate is the awareness of the pluralistic nature of our public schools today. Having moved beyond the segregated era of the pre-1960's we are now faced with the task of creating a school environment which not only places emphasis on academic achievement and student expectations, but also creates a school climate which recognizes and validates the presence of each ethnic or cultural group which comprise our school populations throughout the nation.

Lezotte's definition of school climate suggests that the institutional patterns processes and behavioral practices should reflect the values, beliefs and attitude of the school community members. The insightful

administrator may translate this statement and utilize it as a spring board for action, that moves toward creating a "Building Atmosphere" which assures maximum educational efforts from all the clients who work and learn in the school environment.

The public school is a mirror of the diversity of our society and as such must of necessity focus attention toward the effectiveness of the educational goals and objectives in preparing students for the economic, social and political realities experienced in culturally diverse and complex human encounters (Tyson, 1975).

There are two dangers inherent in an assumption that school and teacher effectiveness should be directed and focused only toward those students of the school population who are members of the dominant/majority culture.

Firstly, it is dangerous to assume that culturally different learners are able to abandon their values, traditions, language and behaviors of their cultural group when they cross the threshold of the educational institution. Secondly, it is dangerous to expect that culturally different learners can feel that they are <u>truly</u> a part of a school environment that a) fails to acknowledge the richness of their heritage, b) whose instructional material portrays them only as a conquered people c) where few role models exist and d) where the professionals are not committed to the advancement of their worth and dignity.

Role of the Administrator

The role of the administrator has been defined by numerous writers in the field, and this writer having served as a junior high/middle school administrator for five years can surely empathize with the myriad of duties and responsibilities which the role demands. However, there is one role which is viewed as key to the notion of school climate and effectiveness. For this discussion, we will look at the administrator as an instructional leader. The administrator is a leader among the various reference groups with which s/he works and as such this role dictates that the administrator sets the tone, and creates the climate in which education takes place. This is a key role played by administrators in that it is a position from which the purpose the school is to serve must be articulated; and an appraisal of the effectiveness of the instructional program must be made. (Campbell, 1970)

It is out of this role that the task of determining the effectiveness of the school climate for the culturally different learner emerges.

Gwen Baker in her book Planning and Organizing for Multicultural Instruction states that "In order to achieve the goals of Multicultural education, it must become a valid part of the educational process. Advocacy is identified as one of the ingredients needed" (Baker, 1983).

Successful advocacy must come from school boards, community, parents, students, superintendents and principals. A second ingredient is comprehensive organizing and planning for implementation of a multicultural program which permeates the entire school district.

The process described by Baker for successful advocacy, places responsibility on the parents and students to establish a committee of community people for the purpose of exploring the needs and benefits for multicultural education. Once this has been done, the next task is for the committee to develop a definition of multicultural education which would be acceptable to the district. Finally, a list of recommendations for implementation is presented to the board.

Acceptance and/or modification of the committee's recommendations, followed by the formulation of well defined goals and objective for the program becomes the task of the school board.

The definition, statement of goals and objectives, and policy set by the board will give the direction and support needed for the superintendent to begin implementation of the program.

Building principals then must support the policy of the board and the superintendent's plan of action for the district. Perhaps the initial task to be performed by the

principal is that of assessing the multicultural climate of the school through a process designed to determine whether an awareness of cultural diversity is existent in the school environment. This may best be accomplished by using an ethnic checklist.

ETHNIC CHECKLIST

1. ARE ETHNIC DIFFERENCES APPARENT IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT?
2. ARE ETHNIC DIFFERENCES EMPHASIZED IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM (COURSES, TEXTBOOKS, OTHER MATERIALS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS ATTITUDES ETC.).
3. DO YOUR SCHOOL LIBRARY AND RESOURCE CENTERS HAVE A VARIETY OF MATERIALS ON THE HISTORIES, EXPERIENCES, AND CULTURES OF DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS?
4. DO SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES, SPEAKERS, IN SERVICE TRAINERS, CONSULTANTS REFLECT ETHNIC DIVERSITY?
5. DO EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES INCLUDE MOST ETHNIC GROUPS PRESENT IN YOUR SCHOOL POPULATION? ARE LEADERSHIP ROLES HELD BY ETHNIC MINORITIES?
6. DO DISTRICT/SCHOOL POLICIES ACCOMMODATE ETHNIC PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR?
7. DO SCHOOL POLICIES MAKE PROVISIONS FOR RECOGNIZING AND COMMEMORATING THE HOLIDAYS AND FESTIVITIES OF DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS?
8. DOES SCHOOL POLICY RESPECT THE DIGNITY AND WORTH OF STUDENTS AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS MEMBERS OF ETHNIC GROUPS?
9. DOES THE MAKE-UP (MEMBERS) OF THE SCHOOL FACULTY REFLECT THE ETHNIC MAKE-UP OF THE COMMUNITY?
10. IS THE SCHOOL STAFF MULTI-ETHNIC DESPITE THE ETHNIC AND RACIAL MAKE-UP OF THE COMMUNITY?
11. DOES THE SCHOOL CONDUCT INSERVICE TRAINING IN MULTI-ETHNIC STUDIES?

12. DOES THE CURRICULUM AND TEACHING METHODOLOGY REFLECT THE ETHNIC LEARNING STYLES OF STUDENTS WITHIN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY?

13. IS THE CURRICULUM AND TEACHING IN THE SCHOOL DESIGNED TO HELP STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOL LIVE IN A MULTI-ETHNIC SOCIETY.

NEGATIVE RESPONSES TO THE ITEMS ON THIS CHECKLIST MAY INDICATE A NEED TO REASSESS YOUR SCHOOL WITH AN EYE FOR CREATING A MORE POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE FOR ALL THE CLIENTS WHO ARE SERVED EDUCATIONALLY IN YOUR DISTRICTS AND LOCAL SCHOOLS.

All too often, little attention is given to the physical environment in which children must live and learn. Creating a multi-cultural school environment should include all of the above as well as bulletin boards, signs, written announcements, lunch and snack menus and all other communication media. (Baker, 1983)

The Role of the Teacher

It has been said that the strength of a superintendent can be measured by the competence of his/her staff - and further that staff strength is dependent upon leadership strength. Acceptance of this point of view implies that assessment and appraisal are activities engaged in fervently by instructional leaders to find the most competent teachers. Given that, teacher education programs have only recently begun to address the need to prepare pre-service teachers in multicultural teaching methodology; it then becomes incumbent upon school administrators to select, recruit and orient new teachers to the impelling need for teacher effectiveness across ethnic lines.

It is not enough for superintendents and principals to be simply aware of the conceptual framework for multicultural instruction but it is of grave importance that they devise ways of improving competence in teaching strategies and techniques that will prove effective in educating culturally different learners.

While structuring of the instructional content will depend upon the goals and objectives of the district, there are some areas which the teachers can immediately effect. The classroom environment can reflect cultural diversity through: 1) bulletin board displays, 2) reading materials representative of various ethnic authors, 3) book collections, 4) pictures, 5) family groupings, 6) nutrition posters. Further, teachers can begin to examine their own feelings and stereotypical perceptions of culturally different learners.

Multicultural curriculum development will require action from administrators in the form of in-service training conducted by knowledgeable, capable consultants in the field of multicultural education. Inservice programs should be planned with specific goals in mind:

1. To develop of a philosophy of educational instruction which is sound workable dynamic and meets the needs of all students in the classroom.
2. To develop a knowledge base - increase teachers' knowledge of their own and other cultures.
3. To foster proficiency in incorporating knowledge of different cultural groups into existing materials, using an integrated approach.

4. To identify and gather resource materials relevant to various cultures for multicultural curriculum development.

5. To understand the value systems of different cultural groups in order to be aware of points of conflict with the expectation of the school.

6. To understand the "role of experience" in planning curriculum for the culturally different learner.

7. To evaluate textbook and learning materials for cultural, linguistic and sex bias.

8. To identify and overcome barriers to effective communication with parents of culturally different children.

9. To communicate high expectations for maximum academic achievement.

10. To utilize positive discipline techniques which aides the student in becoming self directed, self controlled and self disciplined.

It is unrealistic to expect that teachers will be able to gain expertise in the implementation of all of the goal statements during one inservice workshop. Therefore, an ongoing series of working sessions must be conducted, addressing each goal through a thorough and indepth approach. A continuous effort focused on specific goals throughout the school year will provide the catalyst for implementation at each stage of curriculum development, revision and/or modification.

It is important to vary the format for inservice training to include lectures, guest speakers, (preferably members of minority cultures) discussions, and activities which involve teachers in problem solving situations

related to pertinent cultural issues affecting attitudes, behaviors, and achievement of culturally different learners.

Other components of multicultural inservice training should include audio visual and multimedia materials. Careful selection of media materials serves a dual purpose:

1) Aid in development of a cultural knowledge base.
2) Acquaint teachers with AV material appropriate for use in specific disciplines.

Role playing, case studies, problem solving and simulations designed to reflect real life experiences of culturally different children in and out of the school setting formulates an additional valuable inservice component. These activities can increase knowledge and understanding of cultural heritage, the devastating effects of stereotyping, behavioral problems, language barriers and value conflicts.

One pervasive theme should permeate the total multicultural training program for teachers; the understanding that students are different, but <u>difference</u> does not denote <u>inferiority</u>. Minority children may differ in educational ability as well as in the way in which they learn best. Teachers will be able to help these students reach their potential only when they (teachers) understand the cultural factors which affect the learning and behavior patterns of culturally different children.

Further, the multicultural approach to teaching must concern itself with relationships between teacher and pupil, parent and teacher, teacher and community, and the host of other inter/intrapersonal relationships that are central to the learning process. Clearly the need for advocacy, commitment and awareness at each of the levels discussed is needed to insure that teachers understand and utilize multicultural techniques in the instruction of minority children.

It is through a process of advocacy, planning, organizing and training and the acceptance of the reality of cultural diversity of off school population that teacher and school effectiveness can become an attainable goal. Commitment to this goal should be shared by parents, students, school boards, superintendents, principals and teachers.

INSTRUCTING LOW SES

Don't put them at the back of the classroom
Don't give them less time to answer
Don't give them less clues
Don't criticize them more for wrong answers
Don't be too quick to accept wrong answers
Don't give them less praise for correct answers
Don't forget to generally give them as much attention
Remember smiles, a pat on the back
Don't give them less feedback on their answers and work

Don't give highs, but not lows, the benefit of the doubt

Don't forget nonverbal communication
- eye contact
- forward leaning
- head nodding

Use of praise (for low SES, this can be very important, because they often have not received a lot of praise -- because they have not had a lot of success.

Praise genuine progress or accomplishment

Praise when students may not realize their accomplishments

Praise students who respond well to praise

Praise should be informative or appreciative, but not controlling

Praise should show variety and other signs of credibility

Praise should be natural, not theatrical

Praise should be private, usually

Praise should be individualized (personalized)

Praise should tie success to effort

Praise should attribute effort expended to intrinsic motivation

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